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# PHONOGRAPH

## MONTHLY REVIEW

AUGUST 1931

**Israfel Across The  
Gulf** R. D. Darrell

A return to Chopin

**Spanish Gold**

William Sewall Marsh

**News and Reviews of  
New Records**

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# The Phonograph Monthly Review

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

ELSEWHERE in this issue a correspondent refers to the pending appearance of long-playing records that may easily be adapted to present machines and that will supplement rather than render obsolete the discs used now. While it is too early to make any definite announcements, it is no secret in the industry that practicable long-playing records may be expected from at least two companies in the near future. If such records measure up to the mechanical and musical standards of the best of present discs there can be no question but that they will be strongly influential in bringing about the hoped-for renaissance of the phonograph and recorded music. Until the use of a film, steel wire, or paper band for recording can be brought within reasonable price limits, the disc medium seems unrivalled as a recording medium, and the progress it has already made will be little or nothing compared to the strides it will make once a satisfactory long-playing disc is an actuality. Such a disc will be the greatest possible boon to phonography today.

SIR HAMILTON HARTY's Halle Orchestra has long impressed most American record collectors as the finest recording orchestra in England, and one of the most individual and stimulating organizations in the whole musical world. It is unfortunate that the Manchester group could not return the New York Philharmonic-Symphony's visit, but the next best thing is Sir Hamilton's own trip to these shores. We heard him conduct a single concert of the Boston Symphony "Pops" on his way to the Hollywood Bowl where he is appearing from July 14 to 25. It was a genuine pleasure to observe in concert the exercise of Harty's penetrating and sensitive musical powers, long familiar to us on records.

# Israfel Across The Gulf

By R. D. DARRELL

A return to Chopin; the Ballades and Mazurkas \*

One is loath to believe that the echo of Chopin's magic music can ever fall upon unheeding ears. He may become old-fashioned, but like Mozart he will remain eternally beautiful. *CHOPIN: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC.*

SOME thirty years after Huneker concluded a chapter, "Chopin the Conqueror," with the above lines, it is no longer a rare heresy to affirm that Chopin *has* become old-fashioned. Those fettered to a fetish worship of the piano keyboard still make blind obeisance at his shrine, but their digital fluency—or hankering for such dexterity—renders them untrustworthy critics. The well-rounded musician and the non-pianistic amateur alike have been growing steadily away from the slender, sensitive Pole, who like the Koran's Israfel once had the sweetest voice of all God's creatures. In the last decade the break has been strongly marked. Even the pianists of the newer generation draw less and less upon the compositions that once formed the bulk of every recital; the left wing intelligensia regard him as frankly old hat; his status in the post-war musical world is in danger of crystallizing as that of a sentimentalist—at best a superior example of that anathema, the salon composer.

The causes for this radical reversal of the judgment of the best musical minds of a generation ago are not far to seek. The grand Chopin tradition among pianists has declined leaving only a few ghosts of the giants of another day: the stiffening fingers and paling spirits of de Pachmann, Paderewski, and Rosenthal are now adequate at best for shadowy sketches of the glories of their past performances. With their passing the "greater Chopin" is abandoned or botched, and the lesser Chopin, the indubitable salon composer of the slighter preludes, nocturnes, waltzes, and impromptus is left (perhaps properly) to his fate in the hands of dilettantes and the myriads (now lessening) of those who "study piano." And even if the grand tradition had been kept alive, perhaps by the earlier perfection of the phonograph, the present drift would have been inevitable, for Chopin in his strength as well as in his weakness was the quintes-



sence of Romanticism, and romantic qualities are sadly out of fashion in the day of a return to sterner, less idealistic, more intellectual types of feeling. It is not merely Strawinski who has gone back to Bach, it is the main current of musical life. Even Wagner's position is no longer impregnable. Familiarity has raised to maturity its offspring contempt, and the rich, once nourishing cream of a softer age is unmistakably "turning." Between us and Israfel the gulf grows and we can say with Poe

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this  
Is a world of sweets and sours;  
Our flowers are merely—flowers,  
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss  
Is the sunshine of ours.

The moderns have judged, but even they recognize the error of executing judgment too hastily. If there is one thing that the present musical generation prides itself on it is its eclecticism. And so we can turn with lively curiosity from our Bach and Mozart, Elizabethans and Gregorians, Bartok, Sibelius, and Strawinski to recall Chopin to the bar. The defendant's own attorneys plead guilty to the charges of sentimentality and sticky emotionalism against the popular nocturnes, etc., and rest their case on the greater works with the plea to hear them again: surely something of the old fire remains to enkindle the imagination and the heart. Chopin has meant too much to the last generation and to our own youth for his most potent magic to have lost all its old sorcery.

\*Chopin: The Ballades, etc. See page 311.

Two major Chopin recordings this month make such an examination opportune for these pages. Neither pianist involved is of the old school, but both stem from it and are closer to it in kinship than the contemporary first flight of pianists. They have the proper national traits (one is a Frenchman, the other a Pole), and the works chosen are particularly apt: the ballades, with the scherzos Chopin's perfect fusion of content and form, and a selection of the mazurkas, surely the closest of all he wrote to the modern ideal.

The two most popular ballades are excellent examples of the debasement to which even the larger Chopin works have been subjected. Phonographic releases have echoed the concert favoritism of these ballades in G minor and A flat. There have been dozens of recordings, but the present complete set played by Cortot (and the recent completion of Robert Casadesus' set by French Columbia) bring the first recordings of the ballades in F major and F minor. While it is unfortunate that the senseless repetition in insensate or over-emotional hands has dulled perhaps beyond repair the freshness of the popular two, at least the other and greater pair have been spared that tarnishing. Echoes of the Odyssean thunder and surge of the G minor and the artisocratic elegance and sportiveness of the A flat remain, but only those by whom they are heard for the first time will they speak as vigorously and authentically as the other two do to us—and these other two speak in Chopin's most impassioned and individual accents. By them he may fairly be judged.

One critic has written that "the most touching of all that Chopin has written is the tale of the F major ballade . . . It appears like some fairy tale that has become music." A dozen writers have probed exhaustively into the poems of Chopin's compatriot, Mickiewicz, on which these works are admittedly based, but this "fairy tale become music" sums up the work far better, better even than Rubinstein's pretty parable of a field flower caught in a gust of wind. Unquestionably Chopin had a definite program in mind, but today we are no longer concerned with exact "stories" that can only fetter the free strong flight of the music into which the tale has been transmuted. The idealism, the conscious nobility are foreign to contemporary realistic minds, but even these cannot deny or decry the simplicity and purity of the lyricism here, the intensity of the dramatic conflict, the restraint of its treatment, and the conviction of its tragedy. The primary essential we demand

is there: the tale *has* become music; the drama is told in purely musical terms and can be experienced only as music.

The simplicity of the second ballade gives way to a luxuriance in the fourth, but the treatment is no less direct, and the drama is broadened and incredibly enriched. Chopin's flexible, self-evolved form is perfectly expressive of the tonal drama. Here ornamentation is not the gaudy decoration of over-fluent and insignificant melodic material, such as we object to in *Bacarolle* with its cascades of glittering fioriture over a scrawny skeletal bass. This ballade is rather the very apotheosis of ornamentation. Passage work is not a decorative superstructure but an integral part of the architecture. Technically, the imaginative modulations, the sinewy contrapuntal writing (powerful here as nowhere else in Chopin), and the masterly ingenuity of the passages in sixths and thirds make this work of monumental difficulty. The giant of the keyboard is as likely to be baffled as the amateur, for the interpretative scheme must be utterly simple and restrained. Here at least even we moderns must bow our stubborn necks in admiration, for wherever Chopin may yield to prettiness, display, and softness, it is not in the F minor ballade.

The study of Cortot's recorded performances leaves me with a new respect for the man as well as for the music, for these discs reveal nothing of the dry incisiveness and bloodless articulation associated with his playing in recent years. He is digitally careless at times, but his playing is profoundly and unselfconsciously poetic. He has wisely made no attempt to emulate the grand manner of a Rubinstein, nor yet swung entirely over to the dispassionate and intellectual probing of the moderns. Except perhaps in the A flat ballade, where he is over-sweet, he avoids the bombast and over-rich emotionalism of one school and the acridity of the other, and so catches the full heroism and nobility of the music without making it in the least theatrical. The recording is smooth, a little on the "romantic" order; the performances are good, and the "readings" are even better, for they penetrate to the heart of the purest Chopinesque qualities, and while we may label these fantastic and quixotic, even our hardened generation cannot fail to recognize and salute the exuberance of life that animates them here. Mr. Huneker to the contrary, Chopin's was too often the "spirit that denieth," superficial, precious, weakly decadent, but here at the "supreme summit of his art, an art alembicate, personal and intoxicating," the tawdriness and smallness

is purged away by the abundance of life-force and the flexibility and freedom of its formal harnessing.

### The Mazurkas

I SPOKE of Cortot's readings of the ballades as taking course between the old and new traditions. The qualities to be expressed are of course those inherent in the music and if they are suppressed (as by some contemporary pianists) nothing is left by the empty structural shell. But the qualities themselves, while not exactly congenial to us of today, may strike us with renewed conviction and force if the *means of expression* approximate our leaner, more straightforward and taciturn ideals. Yet at best such performances involve some compromise. With the mazurkas we are on easier ground. The last traces of the overheated, perfumed air of the salon is swept away by the fresh air of the countryside. In many of his works, the Polonaises especially, Chopin's much hailed patriotism partook a great deal of the theatricality and selfconsciousness of most expatriates in Paris. But in the mazurkas he is not boasting about the pomp and warlike spirit of Poland, he is recalling and recreating the homely savour of the soil and the melancholy merrymaking of its tillers. Filtered through his aristocratic and sensitive imagination we still get the genuine color and invigorating rhythms of the native dances, caught in the daintiest and yet sturdiest of settings. Their tremendous rhythmical vitality and resilience are their very being. Melodies and forms are merely the inevitable embodiment of that vibrant soul: they *are* their rhythms. So for us there is no fustian to be swept away; we recognize immediately the kinship of their closeness to earth, their brevity and wit, the restraint and yet indubitable genuineness of their sentiment, with our modern temper.

Friedman has always been a strong proponent of the mazurkas even in his early recording days, and the promise of those early discs was the basis of a hope often expressed in these pages that he would be selected to record a collection of these pieces. The critics of this set have not been overly enthusiastic about his playing, but I fail to see the point of the accusation that he lacks the fire and glow of a Paderewski or Pachmann or Rosenthal. To be sure his performances are not distinguished by great subtlety, but they are distinctively individual, and they properly concentrate attention on the rhythmic versimilitude of the music. Fine recording captures all the crispness, vigorous resilience, and sturdy masculinity of his playing. In the less individual pieces, particularly those of the fourth record of the set, he slips

at times into a languid sweetness that brings disturbing of a salon scent, but in the more energetic dances, he gets the full salty savour of the music's vitality and wit.

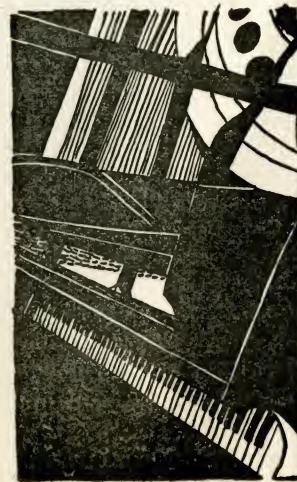
Besides Friedman's set, the only other extensive mazurka contribution is the set of sixteen recorded by Niedzielski for H. M. V. For convenience I subjoin a fairly complete list of the available electrical recordings, including those by Friedman and Niedzielski.

No. 5) B flat major, Op. 7, No. 1. Friedman, Brailowsky

- 6) A minor, 7-2. Friedman; Niedzielski
- 7) F minor, 7-3. Friedman
- 9) C major, 7-5. Niedzielski
- 10) B flat major, 17-1. Niedzielski
- 13) A minor, 17-4. Casadesus
- 17) B flat minor, 24-4. Rosenthal, de Pachmann, Friedman, Niedzielski
- 19) B minor, 30-2. Niedzielski
- 21) C sharp minor, 30-4. Horowitz
- 23) D major, 33-2. Friedman, Niedzielski
- 24) C major, 33-3. Smeterlin
- 25) B minor, 33-4. Smeterlin, Kozalski, Friedman
- 26) C sharp minor, 41-1. Friedman
- 30) G major, 50-1. Niedzielski
- 31) A flat major, 50-2. Friedman, de Pachmann
- 35) C minor, 56-3. Rubinstein
- 37) A flat major, 59-2. Niedzielski
- 38) F sharp minor, 59-3. Marguerite Long, Niedzielski
- 41) C sharp minor, 63-3. Friedman, Niedzielski, de Pachmann
- 44) C major, 67-3. Friedman, Niedzielski.
- 45) A minor, 67-4. Niedzielski, de Pachmann
- 46) C major, 68-1. Niedzielski
- 47) A minor, 68-2. Friedman, Niedzielski, Kozalski
- 48) F major, 68-3. Niedzielski
- 49) F minor, 68-4. Niedzielski

(Brailowsky records for Brunswick-Polydor, Robert Casadesus for Columbia, de Pachmann for Victor, Marguerite Long for Columbia, Arthur Rubinstein for H. M. V.—Victor, Jan Smeterlin for Brunswick-Polydor, Horowitz for Victor, Kozalski for Brunswick-Polydor, and Rosenthal for Parlophone.)

(To be concluded in the next issue)



# Spanish Gold

By WILLIAM SEWALL MARSH

Nuggets from various lists

THE Spanish zarzuelas, those characteristic musical entertainments for which many of Spain's best known composers have not disdained to write, contain much delightful and amusing music. Considerable of this has been recorded, and may be found in the various lists if one knows how to identify it. The writer has lately had the opportunity of hearing recordings from several of these zarzuelas, and has made brief notes on them, which will serve as a guide to those who are interested in Iberian music.

No attempt has been made to give biographical data, as most of the composers are fairly well-known. There is one young man, however, about whom most of us do not know so much, who is writing a great deal of the light music lately produced on the Spanish stage; and I should like to tell you briefly something about Jacinto Guerrero y Torres, who was born in Ajofrón (Toledo), August 16, 1895. He began his musical studies when a choir boy in the Toledo Cathedral; and later studied under Benito Laparra and Conrado del Campo at the Madrid Conservatory. His one-act zarzuela, *La Alsaciana*, met with great success, and placed the young man among the most popular composers of zarzuelas. Later he wrote *La Montería*, in two acts, which has been presented hundreds of times in Spain and Latin America and *Los Gavilanes*, in three acts, which attained so great a success at one time that it was presented simultaneously at five theatres in Barcelona!

Guerrero's music is gay and nearly always pleasing and inspired. Besides stage music, he is also the author of various religious works, a symphonic poem, and *Himno a Toledo*, written in his early youth—his first triumph.

Those who saw *La Argentina* will perhaps remember her charming dance, "La Lagarterana," the music for which was written by Guerrero; and, by the way, there is a Columbia recording of this *vals jota*, played by the composer's own orchestra: Columbia 3936X.

GUERRERO: (*Los Gavilanes* (The Sparrow Hawk)—*Romanza de la Flor* (Romance of the Flower). Victor 46462. This romanza illustrates the pleasing qualities of this very successful zarzuela. There is also an older recording, *Mi Aldea* (My Little Village), which is very good—Columbia 2596-X.



Caballero

Composer of "La Viejecita," etc.  
(From a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

GUERRERO: *Abajo las Coquetas* (Down with the Coquettes)—*Baraja Española* (Deck of Cards); Schottisch. Victor 81912. Instrumental numbers, also played by *Orquesta Ibérica de Madrid* (directed by *Concordio Gelabert*). *Baraja Española* is in the form of a *paso doble*; the schottisch, of course, is as the Spaniard conceives it. Typical popular Spanish music of the present time.

CHUECA y VALVERDE: *La Gran Vía* (Broadway)—Schottische; *Jota de las Ratas* (Pickpockets' Jota) Victor 46859. *Caballero de Gracia* (Elegant Cavalier); *Tango de la Menegilda*, Victor 46858. The four most popular songs from this internationally successful zarzuela in one act—a success easy to understand after listening to these gay and engaging songs, now electrically recorded.

BARBIERI: *Pan y Toros* (Bread and Bulls)—Selection, Columbia 52039-X. Played by *Banda Real del Cuerpo de Guardias Alabarderos de Madrid*. Records of the "selection" type are apt to be rather unsatisfactory, as they seem too fragmentary. This disk is of interest in that it contains melodies from one of the older zarzuelas (produced in 1864), which is, perhaps, the most outstanding and significant work of its kind, from an ethnical standpoint.

BARBIERI: *Los Diamantes de la Corona* (The Crown Diamonds)—Bolero, played by *Orquesta Regal de Madrid*. The bolero form has lately gained prominence through Rav-

el's composition of that name. It is interesting to contrast this short bolero by a Spanish composer, with the longer one of the Frenchman.

VIVES: *Doña Francisquita*—*Coro de Romanticos* (Chorus of Romanticists) Victor 47196. An attractive melody in three-quarter time, sung as a duet and chorus. From Vives' lyric comedy, based on Lope de Vega's play, *La Discreta Enamorada*.

TORROBA y LUNA: *La Pastorela* (Pastoral—Duo; *Romanza de Renunciación* (Romanza of Renunciation) Victor 87037. *Número del Cornetín* (Cornet Number); Shimmy, Victor 80739. These two records are as widely different in style as the composers who collaborated in this work, Moreno Torroba having written in a much more serious vein than Luna. The Duo and Romanza are sung by the well-known baritone, Emilio Sagi-Barba, and Luisa Vela, soprano, and are much more interesting than the Cornet Number (introducing passages on that instrument), and the Shimmy, the music of which, while amusing, is of very light character.

CHAPI: *La Tempestad* (The Tempest)—Duo from First Act, Victor 47196. A delightful duet from this operetta, which is best known to most of us by the *Monólogo*. Little of the music of this distinguished and prolific composer has been recorded; and students of Spanish music will welcome this recording.

SOTULLO y VERT: *La Leyenda del Beso* (The Legend of the Kiss)—*La Piscina de Buda*; *Danza del Opio* (Buddha's Font: Opium Dance) Victor 46493. *Intermedio*, Victor 59043. Sotullo and Vert are contemporary collaborators in the writing of popular stage music. *La Leyenda del Beso* is one of their successes. The two selections are orchestral recordings, and *Intermedio* being a very interesting composition, typically Spanish.

ALONSO: *La Parranda* (The Festival)—*Coplas del Quisiera*; *Los Regalos* (Gifts) Victor 46794. *Canción del Platero* (Song of the Silversmith); *Canto á Murcia* (Song to Murcia) Victor 46305. *Los Botijeros* (The Jar Sellers); *Los Regalos* (Gifts) Victor 46793. Attractive and varied selections from one of the later works by the composer of the enormously successful *Las Corsarias*, admirably illustrating his genius for this type of music. *Los Regalos*, on 46793, is an instrumental arrangement of the song appearing on 46794, played by Orquesta Ibérica de Madrid. I think you will like Alonso's music in this zarzuela.

QUINTERO y GUILLEN: *La Copla Andaluza* (Andalusian Song)—*Fandangos del Desafío*, Victor 46795. *Malagueña de*

*Marchera Despedida de la Madre*, Victor 46796. *Fandanguillo*; *Saeta*, Victor 46797. *Milonga de Guerrita*; *Fandangos del Desafío*, Victor 46707. This music is typical *cante flamenco*, sung by the famous *cantaores*, Niño de Marchtina, and Angelillo, with guitar by Miguel Borrull and L. Yance. The *saeta* (arrow song) is of especial interest. First are heard the bugles and drum, followed by a slow march by the band, and we imagine we can see the *cofradías* (religious brotherhoods) with their varied costumes, accompanying the image-bearing floats. Suddenly a voice "shoots forth" its song into the air—a very realistic recording.

SERRANO: *Los de Aragón* (People of Aragon)—*La Triunfadora* (The Triumpher) Columbia 52034-7. A tenor solo from one of the later works of Serrano, who is best known as the composer of *La Canción del Olvido* (recorded by Yehudi Menuhin).

MONTORIO y UYA: *La Moza de la Alquería* (The Servant of the Farmhouse) *Coro*; *La Java*, Columbia 3898-X. *Romanza*, Columbia 52034-X. A spirited chorus; an imitation of a French *java*; and a lovely *romanza*.

JIMINEZ: *La Boda de Luis Alfonso* (The Wedding of Luis Alfonso)—*Intermedio*, Columbia 3970-X. A sprightly intermezzo, played by the Madrid Symphony, under Arbos.

FUENTES y NAVARRO: *La Guitarra* (The Guitar)—*Macarena* (Elegant Lady); *La Buenaventura* (Good Luck) Columbia 4126-X. I cannot place the composer of this zarzuela, but the music is written in accordance with the best tradition of Spanish stage music—a very interesting disk, containing a soprano solo with chorus, and a soprano and tenor duet.

ZORILLA: *Don Juan Tenorio*, Victor 46860. Not a recording of music, this disk is an excellent example of "the music of the spoken word." On it, Josefina Diaz de Artigas and Santiago Artigas give two scenes from Zorilla's fantastic religious drama: Act II, Scene XI, the scene at the window lattice, between Don Juan and Lucia; and Act IV, Scene III, between Don Juan and Doña Ines. "Don Juan Tenorio" is another version of the story of the immortal Don Juan, and was the great Spanish dramatic sensation of the 19th Century. Although the author did not have an exalted opinion of his drama, its popularity has persisted and it is still presented each year, at the approach of All Saints' Day. Students of the Castilian language will find the beautiful and clear enunciation of the actors on this disk a great assistance in getting the correct pronunciation of difficult letters such as *j*, *z*, final *d*, etc.

# Correspondence

*The Editor does not accept any responsibility for opinions expressed by correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned letters, but only initials or a pseudonym will be printed if the writer so desires... Contributions of general interest to our readers are welcomed. They should be brief and written on one side of the paper only. Address all letters to CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN, THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, Box 138, Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

## Lessons Learned in the Crisis

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

I have read the letters to your last two issues with the most intense interest. In many instances the correspondents betray ignorance of the facts and reasons of many phonographic conditions today, but on the other hand these correspondents do express the feelings of the average record collector, and they are all sincerely anxious to bring about a new popularity and appreciation of better records. However, they have all emphasized the very darkest side of the shield. No one can deny conditions are bad—in this field as in almost every other—but surely it is possible to see some gleams of hope.

Sentiment seems general that prices have been maintained at too high a level, both on records, but especially on instruments. This point has been mulled over so often in the past that it is not necessary to recapitulate the arguments pro and con. I happen to know—by virtue of my long association with the trade—just why prices have been maintained, but the point is that the public does not know. Here I think the present crisis has been a benefit in that it has pointed to the companies that they cannot get along without the use of propaganda and a "public relations bureau." All the other great industries go in for propaganda on a large scale, and whether this propaganda is altogether truthful or not, at least some attempt is made to keep the public's understanding and good will. The high and mighty attitude for most master minds in the phonograph industry in the past will have to be a thing of the past. The policy of the "public be damned" has long since been shown up as fit only for the ash heap.

The present crisis has also revealed the instability of the popular record as a base for the record business. Five years ago when I tried to tell my friends in the industry that the classical and modern musical work on discs would be the real basis of record sales in the future, I got the well known hearty "razz." Today even the least educated of them (musically and otherwise) admit—dolefully to be sure—that the day of the popular record as a big money maker is past, and that the once despised album set seems to be the only hope for the future. Having revealed this fact, the present situation also emphasises the old truth propounded in the first pages of the P. M. R., namely, that the record business is primarily a musical business, not a merchan-

dise business, and that among its officials and salespeople there must be a large proportion of men and women musically trained.

The failure of album sets to do even better than they have in the last two years is due to two causes: lack of the proper publicity and propaganda (as the various correspondents have forcibly pointed out), and lack of the proper musical intelligence all down the line, from the repertory department that picks out works out of key with the demand of the times, to the salesperson who "never heard of it" when confronted with a request for anything more meaty than Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony."

Tied up with this last point is the problem of record distribution which several readers stress. Here again the situation today reveals the necessity of fewer and more musical dealers. It is no longer possible for the repair shop, the electrical house, or the tobacco store to sell records. The course of events has demonstrated that only music companies, equipped with capable salespersons, have been able to successfully survive the business slump. The wholesalers' problem has always been a knotty one, and the tendency to press and distribute very scanty numbers of certain album sets that appeal to a comparative minority has undoubtedly resulted in further decreasing the size of that minority. Until one can be sure of *always* getting a perfect record—free from scratches, incorrect centering, etc.—most popular people are going to demand to hear records before purchase, and if a dealer wants to do the business he must carry a generous stock, and he must be backed up by a regional wholesaler with a complete stock.

Every other industry has passed through periods of slump and despair, and those that have profited by the lessons of such experiences have always come back to make unprecedented progress. The phonographic crisis has made obvious a number of painful truths, many of which were propounded by the "enthusiasts" of over six years ago. Most leading spirits of the industry ignored those points then, but surely they will all profit by the lesson now. If they do we may hope for a glorious renaissance of the phonograph just as soon as the public's buying power begins to return. But such a renaissance will not be made except on the solid foundation of better public relations between the companies and their patrons, intelligent advertising of album sets in the proper media, a wider price range on instruments, either a reduction in record prices or an equivalent by the issue of longer records or by putting more important recordings in the lower price classes, and finally, the development and perfection of the longer-playing record. I have not touched upon this last point, but the topic has been in the air for a long time and most readers of the P. M. R. are probably already familiar with the rumors of the early introduction of a practicable long-playing disc that will be easily adaptable to

present instruments and that will not render the present type of disc entirely obsolete. This is good news indeed: a milestone of phonographic progress, but I must sound the warning again, that even with such a long-playing record, the lessons of the last two years cannot be ignored. If the companies profit by their experiences as well as by their new inventions, we can look for a period of unparalleled progress in musical recording and reproduction.

New York City

EDWIN C. HARROLD

### In Defense of "Les Preludes"

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

It seems to me you are unduly severe on the musical value of "Les Preludes"? This in a sincerely friendly way. It is a piece that in its way sums up French Romanticism, finally and incomparably. Now French Romanticism may not be "simpatica" to you, as it is not to many others. Nevertheless, it was one of the greatest renovating forces of modern art and this force is by no means spent—in fact, will not be for a long, long while to come, as its influence continues to be evident on every hand, including some very unexpected places. Take, for instance, Delacroix, the head of the French Romantic school in painting. I call recall the time very readily when outside France he was not appreciated. Today he is acknowledged to be a giant throughout the entire world of art. The memorial exhibition of his works that was held in this country, making the rounds of the principal galleries last season, was a "best seller" and the attendance everywhere was not only large, but the interest unusual. Now, "Les Preludes," while inspired by the poem of Lamartine (and a very beautiful one, as you are probably aware) is really the equivalent in tone of a Delacroix painting. It is no more bombastic. And its appeal is of the same kind. It always interests me to see the tremendous response it gets when played by the Symphony Orchestra here. Stock usually plays it once every season, and almost invariably at the end of the program. He also plays it extremely well. And it always produces an ovation! You would not characterize it as "faded" or "dated" to judge by the reaction it never fails to evoke. Now when one pauses to realize that it is nearing a hundred years in age and was among the earliest pieces of "program music" it must be admitted that it possesses amazing vitality and is, inherently, of enduring appeal. Most musical critics nowadays have fallen into the habit of treating it cavalierly, but in doing so they are, to me, beside the mark. Certainly, beside it many pieces for orchestra that are widely acclaimed have never struck ten and never will. "Les Preludes" is at once a "document" and a living piece of music and as such deserves no small consideration, according to my lights, from the music-lover.

P. S. By far the best records ever made of the "Ave Maria" and "Salee, salee," from *Otello* are those by Melba—acoustic, of course, but when played upon a modern machine, far superior in tone to the electric ones of recent vintage, while as between Melba's singing and any other—well, it's like Twenty Grand vs. a "selling plater"!

Chicago, Illinois

"JEAN-LOUIS"

### A Typical Reaction

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

It was with sincere regret that I read your editorial "Some Phonograph Ills" and I hope you will plan a way out of the present situation that will receive the support of Phonograph Manufacturers as well as that of the subscribers to the P. M. R. It would certainly be a disaster to both manufacturers and subscribers, should your magazine be forced to suspend. I judge from my own personal experience. During the past year I have purchased 21 Album Sets of records of either Victor or Columbia make at a total cost of \$144.50. This sum does not include the few one and two disk recordings which I also purchased. Every record of the above was favorably commented by the reviewer in your magazine before I would try it myself. If it was strongly commended in your review I was satisfied to merely test the set to see if I liked the composer or the composition and the tone qualities in general. I did not have to try every disk as would be necessary without the sincere comment of a competent critic. Prior to having the assistance of the review columns of the P. M. REVIEW, I can recall listening to records until I was thoroughly tired out before finding one record that was reasonably satisfactory. Without doubt, I probably purchased in the past twelve months over four times as many records as I would have bought without the aid of your magazine. My buying was abnormally large, last year, due to the acquirement of a satisfactory phonograph, having exchanged an Orthophonic Victrola for a combination Victor Radio and Electrola. However, after deducting cost of prior recordings I find that I spent exactly \$81.50, eighty-one dollars and fifty cents for album sets issued during the year. From my experience, I would suggest to Phonograph manufacturers that they sell at moderate price a combination Radio and Electric Phonograph. They could afford to give the Phonograph at the price of the Radio only.

Every Radio listener in time will grow tired of the same old tunes which are broadcast week after week and will turn gradually to their phonograph for something of better quality. Of course, I am speaking of those who listen in to satisfy their desire to hear music.

Newburyport, Massachusetts.

W. C. P.

### Some McCormack Rarities

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

I believe that your readers who admire the vocal art of John McCormack will be interested in several fine examples which I have recently unearthed in Europe. First and foremost is a perfectly marvelous ten-inch record of Mozart's *Ridente la calma*, backed by Handel's *Come My Beloved*, No. DA645, in the catalogue of The Gramophone Company of Czechoslovakia. This record, which reveals Mr. McCormack's voice and interpretive genius at their zenith, appears never to have been issued in England or in the United States. Another remarkable record in the Czechoslovakian list is DA 932, Richard Strauss' *Allerseelen* and *Du meines herzens kronelein*. This is an electrical recording, with piano accompaniment.



# Reviews of New Records

Special reviews of larger works ✓ classified reviews of domestic releases  
lists of new European releases ✓ current importations

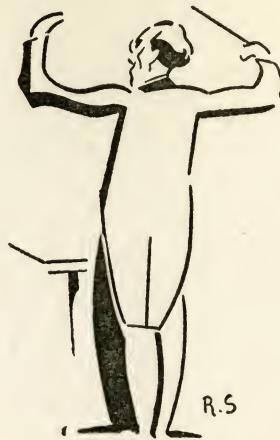
## Le Festin

ROUSSEL: *Le Festin de L'Araignée* (The Spider's Feast), played by the ORCHESTRE DES CONCERTS STRARAM, conducted by WALTER STRARAM. COLUMBIA 67952-3-D (2 DL2s, \$1.50 each).

The labels wisely give an indication of the various episodes of this insect ballet-pantomime. Thus Part 1 is labelled "Prelude and Entrance of the Ant;" Part 2, "Dance and Death of the Butterfly;" Part 3, "Birth and Dance of the Dayfly;" Part 4, "End of the Dance; Death and Burial of the Dayfly." (Dayfly is sometimes given as Mayfly; it is a small moth or fly that dies almost immediately after emerging from its larval state.)

Since no leaflet accompanies the disc it may be well to give a summary of de Voisin's scenario on which the pantomime is based: After a short prelude the curtain rises upon a summer garden in which a spider is preparing its web and surveying the garden for possible prey. A group of ants enter, discover a rose petal, and combine forces to carry it away. A butterfly enters, dances giddily, and is tempted by the spider into the web and killed. The spider disengages the butterfly from the web, envelops her in a shroud, and dances her triumph. A piece of fruit falls from a tree, frightening the spider. Now a group of worms and two praying-mantes (a sort of grasshopper, characterized as "praying" from the devotional appearance of their folded legs) contest for the possession of the fruit. The worms escape by burrowing into the fruit, while the mantes fight between themselves and are soon caught in the spider web. Again the spider dances in triumph. A dayfly is hatched and begins to dance, soon joined by the worms which have emerged—very fat—from the fruit. The spider prepares to capture the dayfly, but already its brief life is over and it dies, intoxicated by the brilliant light of day. One of the mantes has escaped from the web and creeping up unnoticed stabs the spider with its "sword." The spider dies in violent agony. The ants reappear and organize the burial of the dayfly. Exeunt omnes. Night falls on the solitary garden.

Surely a happy bit of entomological fantasy! It caught Roussel's imagination and stimulated him to one of the most ingenious—if microscopic—musical dramas. Working hurriedly, he wrote for his small orchestra with incredible sureness, skill, and humor, drawing his tiny protagonists in the most delicately dainty or grotesque lines. Everything is seen in miniature and no disproportionate note enters. Even the fantastic march of the ants and the horri-



Walter Straram

From a caricature by Robert Simon in "La Joie Musicale")

ble death of the spider are kept perfect relationship to the ethereal dances of the butterfly and dayfly, and the calmly poignant epilogue. This has perhaps no place among music's masterpieces, but in all musical literature there is nothing else quite like it. And no one but Roussel could have written it. Even Ravel could not have avoided a touch of human sentiment, delightful in Mother Goose music, but foreign to the dehumanized and yet ineffably tender spirit of this insect drama.

This set is the first major work of Roussel's to be released in America. It was first recorded over a year ago under the direction of Charles Strony for French H. M. V., and last month Pathé Art in France issued a third version conducted by Roussel himself. The composer praised Strony's recording in no uncertain terms, and I imagine he would also be pleased with Straram's. The extremely delicate gradations of dynamics and nuances are admirably handled. The recording is first rate, retaining the fine colors of the Straram orchestra unblemished. Surely the music is more effective heard on discs than in the distracting atmosphere of the concert hall. With so vivid a ballet scenario as this in one's mind it is easy—with the aid of Straram's fine reading to give a wholly satisfactory performance of the ballet at home. One is not likely to enjoy one in any American opera house or concert hall.

Now that we have Roussel's *Festin*, the jaunty Suite in F, and several songs, it is time for a recording of his most powerful and distinctive work—the first symphony. The second symphony, composed for the Boston Symphony's Jubilee, is much less impressive.

### Another Fifth

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5 in C minor*, Op. 67, played by the STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by RICHARD STRAUSS BRUNSWICK Album Series No. 25 (4 D12s, Alb., \$6.00).

The "run" on Beethoven fifths died down some time ago and new recordings have been gratifyingly seldom recently. Yet for all the profusion of versions there has been none thoroughly satisfactory. Furtwängler's interpretation was by far the best, but the recording was very unsatisfactory. Landon Ronald's was at best a compromise choice for general suitability. I don't know whether the present Strauss set is a brand new recording or one dating a year or two back, but at any rate it measures up to a high recording standard and is an exceedingly well-balanced performance. Contrary to one's expectations, Strauss' reading is by no means academic or routine, but decidedly alert, intense, and forcible in the modern manner. With the possible exception of the Vienna Philharmonic's performance of the Fifth, which I have not yet heard, there can be little question but that this of Strauss is the best all-round recording available today.

### Ballades and Mazurkas

See "Israfel Across the Gulf," page 302

CHOPIN: *Ballades*, played by ALFRED COROT. VICTOR Masterpiece Set M-94 (4 D12s, Alb., \$8.00).

Ballade in G minor, Op. 23 (No 7333). F major, Op. 38 (7334). A flat, Op. 47 (7335). F minor, Op. 52 (7336).

CHOPIN: *Twelve Mazurkas*, played by IGNACIUS FRIEDMAN. COLUMBIA Masterworks Set No. 159 (4 D12s; Alb., \$6.00).

A minor, Op. 7, No. 2; D major, 33-2; F minor, 7-3; and B flat major (7-1 (67948-D)). B flat minor, 24-4, and B minor, 3311-11 (67949-D). C sharp minor 63-3; C major, 67-3; A minor, 67-4; and A minor, 68-2 (67951-D).

### Coates' Rerecorded Francesca

TCHAIKOWSKY: *Francesca da Rimini*—Symphonic Fantasia, Op. 32, played by the LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by ALBERT COATES. VICTOR 11091-2 (2 D12s, \$1.50 each).

Phonophiles whose interest dates from the advent of the electrical recording processes can have little idea of the excitement caused among old collectors by Coates' acoustical recording of *Francesca da Rimini*. Certainly one of the most dynamic—even sensational—bits of orchestral playing ever captured by the old-style recording horn, it presaged to a remarkable degree the realism of the new process. Coates is a fine man for this sort of music: he gives musical meaning to Tchaikovsky's oftentimes nearly empty virtuosity, and he keeps the lush emotionalism of the more lyric measures within firm bounds. It is rather odd that he was not given the opportunity of re-recording *Francesca* earlier, but having waited, he profits by the marked progress that even the last year has seen in recording.

The piece is a companion to the overture-fantasia *Romeo and Juliet*, yet even more dramatic and colorful, and much more closely knit together. The

program is based on the fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno*. Andante lugubre—"Dante arrives in the second circle of hell. He sees here the incontinent are punished, and their punishment is to be tormented continually by the cruellest winds under a gloomy air. Among these tortured ones he recognizes Francesca da Rimini, who tells her story." A theme in the bass announces the approach of Francesca and Paolo (side 2). The wood wind take the theme and a recitative leads to the second section of the fantasia—*andante contabile non troppo*, painting the felicity of the two lovers. For a time the "sweetness of human love and poignant memory" prevail against the horrors of hell, but soon the lamenting ghosts of the damned close in again and the lovers vanish in the storm.

A fit theme for the neurasthenic Russian and one that drew out perhaps his most characteristic orchestral writing. Francesca's long dark melody is perhaps the best he ever penned, and even the diabolical furies of the finale of the fifth symphony are surpassed by the frantic tonal hurricanes here. The end of the work with its shattering, insanely repeated heavy chords led music further along the path begun by Beethoven and ending in the cul-de-sac of the battle section of *Ein Heldenleben*, the "Mars" movement of the *Planets* suite. A blind alley, but one that had to be explored before music could be free to return to the problems of texture and feeling that are bound up most closely with its expressive potentialities.

Coates plays the work as Tchaikovsky wrote it—up to the hilt. There are not more than two conductors today who could hope to equal this recorded performance, and none likely to surpass it. It is very safe to prophecy a lively success for it.

### A Strauss Miscellany

JOHANN STRAUSS: *Five Waltzes*. VICTOR Concert Album No. 15 (5 D12s, Alb., \$7.50).

*Thousand and One Nights*, played by the VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, conducted by CLEMENS KRAUSS (9990).

*My Darling* (from "The Gypsy Baron"), played by the BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, conducted by LEO BLECH (9991).

*Artists' Life*, played by the VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, conducted by ERICH KLEIBER (9992).

*Village Swallows*, played by KLEIBER and the VIENNA PHILHARMONIC (9993).

*Reminiscences of Vienna*, played by a SALON ORCHESTRA—Conductor unnamed (9994).

Despite the diversity of conductors, no one can honestly claim that the cooks spoil the Straussian broth. Victor is to be thanked for assembling these five courses in conveniently assimilated form. This album felicitously supplements the Brunswick-Polydor set of six of the most famous Strauss waltzes. I cannot say that any of the conductors here surpasses Prüwer as a waltz man: clever as Blech, Krauss, and Kleiber are, they seldom succeed as Prüwer does in tempering brilliance and vivacity with Viennese sensuousness and a more delicate sentiment than can creep into performances which are primarily "concert" rather than "dance" in key.

Kleiber comes closest. His *Artists' Life* and *Village Swallows* are not so rudely energetic and heavy as Blech's and Krauss' less sensitive performances. Blech—for all his recording experience—lays on with so heavy a hand that his grunts are plainly caught by the microphone. Yet at that he makes the most of that superb episode about two-thirds through the first side of *My Darling* waltz. The unspecified conductor of *Reminiscences of Vienna* patterns his performance on those of Blech and Krauss.

It is a joy to have not only five Strauss waltzes, but five of the less familiar ones, for the *Blue Danube* and *Voices of Spring* by no means sum up the incomparable Johann's achievements in "dreiviertel takt." Four of these waltzes are of the first water. The *Reminiscences* is a series of selections (compiled by the composer himself?) and while highly stirring in the present bumptious performance, there is not the unity of mood, the fragrance, and gracefulness of the pure waltzes.

But there can be no reservations in commending the album. With Mr. Phillips (reviewing the Prüwer set in the March 1931 P. M. R.) and many another eminently serious musician I earnestly advise the purists who would sniff "at so much bother about mere dance music" to hear the records "and let themselves go somewhat, instead of continuing disdainfully to deprive themselves—like 'teetotalers'—of the delights of these sparkling and, be it affirmed with approbation, intoxicating wines."

### Mountain Air Symphony

D'INDY: *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*, Op. 25—Finale, played by JEANNE-MARIE DARRE, with the LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90176 (D12, \$1.50).

D'Indy's music as a rule is so markedly cerebral that it is small wonder concert audiences find it too intellectual to their taste. There is some fine musical meat in much of it—notably the second symphony—but undeniably it lacks the juices of humor and sentiment. At best one admires it without managing to muster up any genuine liking. There is the inevitable exception: this "Symphonie Cévenole" or *Symphony on a Mountain Air*, which of all the works of D'Indy I have heard in concert I remember as really enlivening and warming. The construction of the work is interesting in its cyclical development of a single theme (to be found in Tiersot's "Histoire de la Chanson Populaire en France"), and for the treatment of the piano as an important integral part of the orchestra rather than a solo instrument. I hope that eventually Brunswick will give us the other two movements of the work; the vivacious finale tossed off in such high-spirited fashion by Mlle. Darré and the invariably vigorous Wolff whets my appetite for the complete work in so effective a recorded performance. Of all D'Indy's works it is the one best suited to represent him phonographically, and the recording and playing here do both composer and composition full justice.

R. D. D.

(See also the reviews of choral works by Mozart and Bruckner, Warlock's "Capriol" suite, two pieces by Roger-Ducasse, and a Bach concerto for three pianos—pages 317-319.)

## INSTRUMENTAL

### Piano

REGER: *Maria Wiegenlied* and *Humoresque*, and BRAHMS: *Romance*, played by EDWARD GOLL. BRUNSWICK 15222 (D10, \$1.50).

It is heart-warming to hear again from our old Australian friend, Edward Goll, whose seventy years have brought no stiffening of the pianistic muscles or hardening of the musical spirit's arteries. The present disc of miniatures doesn't rank with the earlier Bach suite or Beethoven sonata, but it makes pleasant listening—as does all his work. The Reger cradle song is familiar in its original version; the not very gay humoresque less so. The grave, songful Brahms Romance rounds out the disc graciously. The recording is good.

### Violin

FIBICH: *Poem*, and SCHUBERT (arr. SPALDING) *Hark! Hark! the Lark*, played by MISHEL PIASTRO, with piano accompaniments by JASCHA VEISSI. BRUNSWICK 15221 (D10, \$1.50).

We recently had the Fibich Poem from one of the Schubert Centennial prize winners for Victor. Piastro's broadly vibrant version contrasts interestingly with the finer-fibred performance by Ruth Posselt. Piastro plays the Schubert transcription with considerably less forcefulness than Spaulding himself (Edison), but his smooth warmer version is more effectively suited to recording. As in all Piastro's discs, the violin tone is felicitously captured.

SUK: *Un poco triste*, Op. 17, and DE FALLA (arr. KREISLER): *Spanish Dance* (from "La Vida Breve"), played by EDITH LORAND, with piano accompaniments by MICHAEL RAUCHEISON. COLUMBIA G-50298-D (D12, \$1.25).

It is seldom that Miss Lorand is to be heard in anything but Leharian or lighter material. She is still a deft fiddler, however, and tackles the familiar Spanish Dance with aplomb and the Suk morceau expressively. The recording copes none too well with the more vibrant violin tone.

### Organ

BUXTEHUDE: *Prelude and Fugue in G minor*, played by ALFRED SITTARD, on the organ of St. Michael's Church, Hamburg. BRUNSWICK 90177 (D12, \$1.50).

Reviewed some two years ago from the German pressing, this is still one of the most noteworthy organ recordings. The work is interesting both historically and musically. It was the first piece by Bach's forerunner to be recorded. Since that time a Cembalo Trio has appeared (reviewed last month), and another organ prelude and fugue (reviewed among the importations elsewhere in this issue). Like the work in E the prelude here is a brief one, but the fugue here is much more elaborate, with very broad and impressive climactic points. Sittard plays it powerfully and the brilliance of the recording is marred only by the long reverberation period. A notable organ disc.

R. O. B.

## LIGHT ORCHESTRA

LINCKE: *Amina*, played by the LONDON NOVELTY ORCHESTRA, and *Down South*, played by the BAND OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE, conducted by J. H. AMERS. COLUMBIA 2476-D (D10, 75c).

Two "characteristic" numbers played by their respective organizations with much verve and enthusiasm. The second number—an "American fantasy"—is particularly amusing.

BEETHOVEN: *Moonlight Sonata*—*Adagio sostenuto*, and GODARD: *Adagio Pathétique*, Op. 128, No. 3, played by the VICTOR CONCERT ORCHESTRA and VICTOR STRING ENSEMBLE respectively, conducted by NATHANIEL SHILKRET. VICTOR 36028 (D12, \$1.25).

Serious but not over-sentimentalized versions of familiar salon pieces. I presume Mr. Skirkret himself is the unspecified orchestrator. Good recording and unexaggerated treatment makes this a light concert disc of considerably more worth than most of its kind.

JOHANN STRAUSS: *Joy Bells Waltz*, and LEHAR: *Count of Luxemburg Waltzes*, played by DAJOS BELA'S ORCHESTRA. COLUMBIA G-50301-D (D12, \$1.25).

Columbia can hardly issue too many of these Odeon favorites. The two performances here are in Dajos Bela's best manner, a trifle too suave at moments perhaps, but amply vivacious at others. *Joy Bells* is emphatically not one of the great Strauss waltzes, but it is as danceable and catchily tuneful as the best of them. Lehár's Count of Luxemburg waltz may be a little lush, but I defy the most cold-blooded to listen unstirred by its captivating melodic and rhythmic urge.

URBACH (arranger): *Fantasy of Melodies by Offenbach*, played by MAREK WEBER'S ORCHESTRA. VICTOR (International list) V-50033 (D12, \$1.25).

Typical Weberian performances of familiar Offenbach melodies, the brighter ones played with great verve, the more lyric with great emotion.

YOSHIMITO: *Japanese Lantern Dance*, and SEIDEL: *Chinese Street Serenade*, played by the GRAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by DR. WEISSMANN. COLUMBIA (International list) G-59078-F (D12, \$1.25).

WALDTEUFEL: *Drifting Leaves*—*Waltz*, and OSCAR STRAUSS: *Last Waltz*, played by EDITH LORAND'S ORCHESTRA. COLUMBIA (International) G-59080-F (D12, \$1.25).

ROBRECHT: *Medley of Famous Waltzes*, COLUMBIA G-59077 (D12, \$1.25). JOHANN STRAUSS: *Voices of Spring* and *Viennese Bonbons*, COLUMBIA G-59079 (D12, \$1.25). LEHAR: *Schön ist das Welt*—*Medley*, COLUMBIA G-12151-F (D10, 75c). All played by DAJOS BELA'S ORCHESTRA.

These are all re-pressings of some of the most popular releases in the Odeon series of a year or two ago. Dr. Weissmann's disc of two "characteristic" pieces in very pseudo-oriental vein are done with great brilliance and dash. The Lorand coupling is rather below the level of her best performances. The Robrecht Medley of Famous Waltzes is the best record of the lot, a well chosen and arranged selection, played and recorded with highly attractive deftness.

O. C. O.

## SONGS

WAGNER: *Traume and Schmerzen*, sung in German by ELIZABETH OHMS, with orchestral accompaniments—the first conducted by PREUWER and the second by GURLITT. BRUNSWICK 90178 (D12, \$1.50).

As the germ for two of the greatest portions of *Tristan* these songs appear to their best advantage with orchestral accompaniment, and the competent accompaniments provided here by Prüwer and Gurlitt gives this disc marked value. Madame Ohms, despite a somewhat unpleasing higher register and occasional none too certain pitch, gives a well considered and executed interpretation. For an ideal interpretation I should prefer Geraldine Farrar—who sang these songs recently in concert, but failing that Madame Ohms' versions fill a need very satisfactorily.

GASTALDON: *Musica Proibita*, and NUTILE: *Mamma mia che vo'sape*, sung in Italian by BENIAMINO GIGLI, with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 7400 (D12, \$2.00).

For some unknown reason triteness in Italian is never as hard to bear as it is in English, and the superb performance of Gigli does much to redeem the hackneyed selections and to enhance the still lovely melody of the "Forbidden Music" and the still unextinct vitality of *Mamma Mia*.

GUION: *Home on the Range*, and RASBACH: *Trees*, sung in English by JOHN CHARLES THOMAS, with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 1525 (D10, \$1.50).

The first Victor releases of the noted American baritone scarcely add to his musical stature. The familiar Rasbach setting of Kilmer's poem is sung with excessive slowness, and the Guion cowboy song lacks much of the vivaciousness of his brilliant instrumental settings of cowboy dances and breakdowns. Mr. Thomas sings it with appropriately nostalgic sentiment.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOW: *Song of India*, and DELIBES: *Les Filles de Cadiz*, sung in French by AMELITA GALLI-CURCI, with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 1524 (D10, \$1.50).

Here is apt material for the celebrated coloratura. She sings them with rather painful precision and her voice begins to reveal the marks of age, but her admirers will find the disc well suited to their taste. It is hardly likely, however, to win her new converts.

MOORE-GATTY: *Bendemeer's Stream*, and TRADITIONAL (arr. FISHER): *Would God I Were the Tender Apple Blossom* (Londonderry Air), sung in English by ANNA CASE, with piano accompaniments by CARROLL HOLLISTER. COLUMBIA 2480-D (D10, 75c).

Excellent versions of familiar Irish semi-folksongs, sung by the American soprano in exceptionally good voice. Hollister's accompaniments are also very neatly turned.

R. B.

## OPERATIC

VERDI: *Ernani*—*O sommo Carlo*, and *Rigoletto*—*Cortigiani, vil razza*, sung in Italian by RICCARDO STACCIARI, with orchestral accompaniments. COLUMBIA. 50300-D (D12, \$1.25).

Although the veteran baritone's voice has lost a great deal of the quality that made him famous, his years of experience show in a recording of this nature, and there is much to admire in his delivery of the bitter Rigoletto aria and the more declamatory measures from the older Ernani. In the latter aria he is assisted by an able chorus.

SULLIVAN: *H. M. S. Pinafore*—*Vocal Gems*, sung in English by the COLUMBIA LIGHT OPERA COMPANY. COLUMBIA 50299-D (D12, \$1.25).

The D'Oyly Carte Co. proffers so unparalleled performances of Gilbert and Sullivan that the other companies are wise in letting Victor hold the field alone with complete recordings. Single discs of popular selections, however, are always welcome—particularly to those who cannot afford the expensive complete albums, and the English Columbia Light Opera Company does a brisk and reasonably expert job with the more popular numbers from *Pinafore*. The recording here is vigorous and the singing vivacious: a good record of its kind.

### Pola Negri

*Black Eyes* and *Farewell, My Gypsy Camp*, sung in Russian by POLA NEGRI, accompanied by BORIS GOLOVKA (guitar) and his GYPSY CHORUS. VICTOR (International list) V-73 (D10, 75c).

A genuine novelty that well bears unearthing from the International lists and that promises well for the success of Pola Negri's talkie debut. Her voice is surprisingly characteristic, deep, dark, and highly dramatic. Both songs are done in traditional Russian style with great verve and force.

### Band

GENTRY'S TRIUMPHAL MARCH, and *Old Glory Triumphal March*, played by RINGLING BROTHERS' and BARNUM & BAILEY'S BAND, conducted by MERLE EVANS. VICTOR 22671 (D10, 75c).

Highly atmospheric circus music, with the calliope playing its accustomed part in these brilliant grand triumphal entries. If you like circuses, this disc will please you immensely.

### Erratum

In reviewing the Brunswick recording of Bach's third Brandenburg Concerto last month I carelessly confused the Rosamunde excerpt on the odd side with an earlier excerpt also conducted by Furtwängler. The piece on the odd side of the concerto (Brunswick 90162) is the Entr'acte No. 3 in B flat major. The piece coupled with the Air from Bach's suite in D (Brunswick 90059) is the Ballet Music No. 1 in G major. The similarity in excellence of tone quality and delicacy of nuance must have been the cause of my identifying them as the same recording, for the two pieces are clearly labelled. Both are remarkable tributes to Furtwängler's polished musicianship and interpretative insight.

## POPULAR

### Novelty

HERE is only one comic—*Henry Burbig*, who recounts a tale of William Tell and gives a sketch of Bessie the Telephone Operator on Victor 22695. The historical tale is very far from being hysterically funny, but the sketch of Bessie is both shrewdly and amusingly done. For canary lovers Victor (international list) issues two new discs by the birds of *Reich's Aviary*, Germany. On V-66 the birds twitter to typical light melodies, but V-71 is something of a novelty in that the accompanying music is nothing less than the "Waldweben" from *Siegfried*. The best of this group, however, is the Victory "Novelty Record" (22745): the triple-track disc recently devised by H. M. V. Each side contains three tunes recorded in entirely separate needle tracks. The game is to get the needle started in the particular track—i.e., tune—you want.

### Instrumental

Lee Sims' piano versions of *Rockin' Chair* and *Stardust* (Brunswick 6132) is the only instrumental disc worthy of special mention, as *Terence Casey's* organ solos—*Rustiques* and *Policeman's Holiday*—on Columbia 2478-D is very thin theatre—organ "characteristic" stuff. *The Venetian Players*, in *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes* and *Banjo Song* (Columbia 2459-D) more interesting, but their gravely expressive playing borders dangerously on the ultra-lush. Sims, however, especially in *Rockin' Chair*, combines a marvellous jazz piano technique with a swell tune in a piece genuinely moving.

### Songsters

The incomparable *Ethel Waters* walks jauntily off with first honors again, this time with *You Can't Stop Me from Lovin' You* (from Leslie's "Rhapsody in Black") on Columbia 2481-D. The material is amusing and effective and her delivery in her freest and most rhapsodic manner—a grand performance. Without that Gal, on the other side, in much less characteristic. Next are the *Boswell Sisters* and *Maurice Chevalier*, the former in amazingly ingenious and virtuosic harmonizations of *Shout Sister Shout* and *Roll On Mississippi* (Brunswick 6109), and the latter in *Moonlight Saving Time*, sung much more freshly here than in most versions, and a more forced *Right Now* (Victor 22723). *Sandy MacFarlane* provides two of his well-liked Scotch songs on Columbia 2461-D; *Ruth Etting* warbles in familiar dulcet style in *Moonlight Saving Time* and *Faithfully Yours* (Columbia 2470); and *Morton Downey* demonstrates on Victor 22673 and 22674 that radio fame, even the most sensational, does not indicate the least degree of musicianship, individuality, or originality.

### Vocal Ensembles

The *Bel-Canto Quartet* offers very sentimental and sonorous harmonizations of *Winding Trail* and *Until the Dawn* on Brunswick 6115. Negro spirituals are available on Brunswick 7211 (*World Famous Williams Jubilee Singers*), Columbia 14605 (*Dunham Jubilee Singers*), and Okeh (*Cotton Pickers Quartet*). The last is perhaps the best: sturdy heartfelt versions of *Jesus Fit de Battle of Jericho* and *Steal Away*, although the Williams' Singers are also effective in a different way.

## DANCE

## Third Little Show

THE three big hits from Beatrice Lillie's latest successes are out in a wide variety of performances. One of them is an original and diverting novelty, a take-off on the rumba craze, written with brilliant effectiveness—When Yuba Plays his Tuba Down in Cuba. Amazingly, the best record of this vivacious and saucy jeu d'esprit is not *Buddy Campbell's* (Okeh 41507), nor *Harry Reser's* (Brunswick 6137), nor the *Knickerbockers'* (Columbia 2483-D), but *Rudy*, yes Crooner, *Vallee's* (Victor 22742). For once *Rudy* abandons his languid heart-to-heart style and sings out. Abetted by a dashing orchestral background he turns out a magnificent record. Victor also steals honors for the other two hits, *You Forgot Your Gloves* and *Falling in Love*. *Waring's Pennsylvanians* (22706) are just a little bit too competent, deft, and ingenious for their competitors: Victor Young (Brunswick 6123), and Specht (Columbia 2472-D), although Young's *Falling in Love* is given a richly symphonie performance.

## Band Wagon; Crazy Quilt

High and Low and Dancing in the Dark, the hit songs from the "Band Wagon," are played by *Jacques Renard* (Brunswick 6136), *Ben Selvin* (Columbia 2473), and *Waring's Pennsylvanians* (Victor 22708). Again the *Pennsylvanians*' greater deftness, abetted by some exceedingly neat sotto-voce singing give them a slight edge, but Renard's strong-voiced, vigorous High and Low, and Selvin's beautifully balanced and songful Dancing in the Dark are likely to be preferred by many dancers. In the "Crazy Quilt" hits, I Found a Million Dollar Baby in a Five and Ten Cent Store and Sing a Little Jingle, the *Pennsylvanians'* still cling to the lead as far as the latter song is concerned—largely due to the very clever arrangement, but the fine vigor and color of *Specht's* playing of the former song (Columbia 2482-D) should make it better liked for dancing, if not as stimulating to students of the niceties of jazz band scoring. *Victor Young*, aided by the *Three Boswell Sisters* (Brunswick 6128) also does very well with Sing a Little Jingle.

## Rumbas

*Fiesta*, the popular American adaption of the rumba, is given an interesting performance by *Ben Bernie* (Brunswick 6107—coupled with an amusing *Alpine Milkman*), while *Henry Busse* (Victor 22678) and the *California Ramblers* (Columbia 2456-D) offer better dance versions—if less humorous sketches. The Ramblers' On a Night Made for You also employs rumba flavor to neat effect. The real thing is to be found on Victor 22685—*Siboney and Maria My Own*, played by *Alfred Brito* and his *Siboney Orchestra* in highly piquant rhythmic fashion, exotically colored and surely played. *Vincent Lopez* also plays *Maria My Own* (coupled with *The Voodoo* on Brunswick 6112), but here the performances, while fine for dancing, are more conventional.

## Novelty

The Alpine Milkman offers fine opportunities for humorous yodelers and devisers of comic orchestral effects, and *Ben Bernie* makes the most of them in his performance on Brunswick 6107—already mentioned). *Jack Hylton* with his crack British dance also does an amusing, if more restrained job (Victor 22697) and couples it with a very dapperly scored and fine toned performance of another of the ubiquitous miniature martial tunes—this time, *Soldier on the Shelf*. *Hylton* also turns in a splendid bit of playing, symphonie, yet mildly hot, in *Sitting on a Five-Barred Gate*, and coupled to a less effective *If You Can't Sing Whistle* (Victor 22693).

## TONFILM HITS

*IRENE EISINGER*, the cool-voiced star of "Zwei Herzen" and "Försterchristel," may now be heard in a fine recording of two charming songs from the latter film, recently shown in several American cities. Both the Mai-Lied and Echo-Lied are delightful and should find a wide public (Victor V-6122). The hit songs from Tauber's successful film, "Der Grosse Tenor"—Ich bin ja so vergnügt and Ich sing' dir ein Liebeslied, respectively a fox trot and tango, are given bright and vivacious performances by Dajos Bela's orchestra on Columbia G-5238-F.

## Die Privatsekretärin

The leading songs are *Mein Herz hab' ich gefragt* and *Ich bin ja heut' so glücklich*, a waltz and a fox trot, both fine swinging tunes played in exuberant fashion and excellent tone by *Marek Weber* on Victor V-6123, and sung in less polished but almost equally catchy style by *Renate Müller* on Columbia 5234-F. On Columbia G-5236-F *Paul Abraham*, the composer, leads his own orchestra in a fantastic, highly jazzed and infectious performance of another song from the same film—Ich hab' ne alte Tante.

## A Severa

Victor brings out six tunes from one of the first of the Portugese films, "A Severa," music composed by *De Freitas*. The two sad songs on 33026 and the two gladder songs on 33027 are not of great general interest, but 33028 contains more stimulating fare: an attractive waltz played by the *Orquesta Parisienne* conducted by the composer, and a very strange chant for unaccompanied baritone, with melancholy choral responses.

## Miscellaneous Films

*Nicolas Amato* does a fair job with *Nous sommes* seal from the superb French film, "Le Million," but the disc's value is marred by the accordion accompaniments (Victor V-5525). *Cueto* and *Moriche* offer competent Spanish versions of the title song and *You Too* from "Zwei Herzen" (Victor 30484). The *Mignone* orchestra plays the lugubrious title waltz and a rather colorless tango, *Guitarita*, from an Italian film, "La Canzone dell'Amore." —RUFUS

# New European Releases

## Orchestral

Bach (Christian): Sinfonia B flat, Mengelberg—N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony (H. M. V.)

Beethoven: Egmont overt., Mengelberg—N. Y. Philharmonic-Symphony (H. M. V.)

Humperdinck: Hansel und Gretel overt., Mengelberg—N. Y. Philharmonic Symphonie (H. M. V.)

Janacek: Lasské Tänze, Kleiber—Berlin Philharmonic (Ultraphon)

Lalo: Roi d'Ys overt., Gaubert—Symphony Orchestra (Fr. Columbia)

Lalo: Namouna, Coppola—Paris Conservatory Orch. (Fr. H. M. V.)

Ravel: La Valse, Monteux—Paris Sym. (Fr. H. M. V.)

Ropartz: La Cloche des Morts, Ropartz—Symphony Orchestra (Pathé-Art)

Roussel: Le Festin de l'Araignée, Rousel—Symphony Orchestra (Pathé-Art)

Saint-Saëz: Phaeton, Cloez—Paris Philharmonic (Parlophone)

Saint-Saëns: Danse Macabre, Kleiber—Berlin Philharmonic (Ultraphon); Cloëz—Opera Comique Orch. (Parlophone).

Strauss (Johann): 1001 Nights Waltz, Weingartner (Columbia)

Strauss (Richard): Salomes Tanz, Knappertsbusch—Berlin S. O. H. Orchestra (Parlophone)

Weber: Freischütz overt., Gaubert—Symphony Orch. (Fr. Columbia)

## Piano

Albeniz: Orientale and Seguidillas, Vines (Fr. Col.)

Albeniz: Castilla and Granada, Sigrid Schneevoight (Ultraphone)

Chopin: Trois nouvelles études, Lortat (Fr. Col.)

Grieg: To Spring, Butterfly, Wedding Day at Trollhagen, Giesecking (Parlophone)

## Organ

Bach: Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, W. G. Alcock (H. M. V.)

Buxtehude: In dulce jubilo; Handel: Organ concerto in F sharp minor; Pachelbel: Pastorale, Heitmann (Ultra.)

## Violin

Bach: Gavotte in E, and Brahms: Hungarian Dance in A, Menges (H. M. V.)

Bach: Air on G String, and Brahms: Waltz in A, Hubermann (Parlophone)

Corelli: La Folia, Menuhin (H. M. V.)

Monsigny: Rigaudon, and Ottokar-Novacek: Moto perpetuo, Menuhin (H. M. V.)

## Guitar

Torroba: Notturna, and Malats; Serenata, Segovia (It. H. M. V.)

## Operatic

Andrea Chenier, complete, Molajoli—La Scala Co. (It. Col.)

Adriane auf Naxos—Alone here doth she dwell, Lotte Lehmann (Parl.)

Armide (Gluck)—Plus j'observe ces lieux, Rogatchewsky (Fr. Col.)

Ballo in Maschere—Ma dall'arido stelo and Morroma prima in grazia, Rethberg (H. M. V.)

Czarevitch: Willst du and Wolgalied, Tauber (Parl.)

Enfance du Christ (Berlioz)—Le repos de la Sainte Famille, and Faust (Berlioz)—Merci doux Crépuseule, Saint-Criq (Pathé-Art)

Götterdämmerung—Immolation Scene, Leider—Berlin S. O. H. Orch. (H. M. V.)

Otello—Credo and Serenade, Wilhelm Rode (Parl.)

Tannhäuser—Le retour de Rome, Franz (Pathé-Art)

## Songs

D'Albert: Zur Drossel, and Berger: Ach, wer das doch könnte. Lehmann (Parl.)

De Falla: El pano moruno, and Parades: Ayer en la Tristeza, Sofia del Campo (Fr. H. M. V.)

Duparc: Phidylé, Martinelli (Pathé-Art)

Irish folksongs—Flower of County Down and Ballynure Ballad, Richard Hayward (Decca)

Lowe: Odins Meeresritt and Kleiner Haushalt, Paul Bender (Ultraphon)

Morocco—Quand l'Amour meurt and Give me the man, Marlene Dietrich (German H. M. V.)

Nie Wieder Liebe—Leben ohne Liebe and Wenn ich mir 'was wünschen dürfte. Dietrich (Ger. H.M.V.)

## Choral

Mozart: Benedictus: Cherubini: O Salutaris; Bruckner: Gloria (E minor Mass), Munich Cathedral Choir (Ultra.)

## Zarzuelas

Caballero: La Viejecita, Teatro de Liceo Co (Sp. H. M. V.)

Luna: Molinos de Viento, Teatro de Liceo Co. (Sp. H.M.V.)

## Miscellaneous

Balieff's Chauve Souris, 2nd Album (Col.)

Columbia History of Music, 2nd album (vocal pieces by Monteverdi, Purcell, Handel, Bach; instrumental pieces by Corelli, and Bach) (Columbia)

# Current Importations

## A Christschall Choral Package

IT WAS with the greatest interest that I opened this package of records, which were the first I had heard of either of the German companies devoted to the recording of ecclesiastical music. That the field is inexhaustible and contains a major portion of the world's greatest music is a fact almost too obvious to mention, and any organization seriously devoting itself to its publication on discs deserves the heartiest support. The gorgeous labels, in cardinal red and gold, are skilfully conceived to express the august character of the contents: the earlier numbers bear the crossed keys of St. Peter, and the later the papal tiara. In the actual records themselves one must, however, prepare oneself for some disappointment, but this lack of mechanical perfection is not less than should be expected in a company having as yet scarcely one hundred records to its credit, and which has from the first by very nature of its purpose been forced into the supremely difficult and uncertain field of choral recording, usually in churches having the most varied acoustic properties. The surface is very good. The choice of material in such a vast field must certainly be difficult, and it is perhaps intentionally that they have so far confined themselves chiefly to German composers, although in the future we shall hope for more attention to the earlier foreign polyphonic schools, which is to be sure virtually the only period in which German religious music can be surpassed.

### Mozart

MOZART: *Requiem Mass*—*Dies irae* and *Tuba mirum*. Sung in Latin by soloists with the CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA OF THE SALZBURG CATHEDRAL, conducted by JOSEPH MESSNER. CHRISTSCHELL 72. (D 12).

MOZART: *Mass in B*,—No. 13—*Benedictus*, and *Coronation Mass*—*Agnus Dei*. Sung in Latin by MARIA ODERMATT-PRODOLLIET and the GREGORIUS CHOIR OF THE LIEBFRAUENKIRCHE, ZUERICH, with string orchestra and organ, conducted by HERMANN ODERMATT. CHRISTSCHELL 42. (D 12).

MOZART: *Coronation Mass*—*Dona nobis pacem*. Sung in Latin by soloists and the CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA OF THE SALZBURG CATHEDRAL, conducted by JOSEPH MESSNER. *Organ Sonata in C*, played by JOSEPH MESSNER, with the ORCHESTRA OF THE SALZBURG CATHEDRAL. CHRISTSCHELL 83. (D 12).

The Mozart numbers are all charming, although admittedly not belonging to the highest type of religious expression. Both the *Requiem* and the *Coronation Mass* have been recorded entire in the Salzburg Cathedral—the first in twelve, the second in seven parts. The fact that Mozart himself was so much associated with this building, and the appropriateness of its richly baroque setting, besides the excel-

lence of the musical organization itself cannot but lend an added interest to these complete recordings of such major works. As almost without exception in all of these records, the greatest factor contributing to the often lamentable lack of clarity seem to lie in the chopping off of the higher frequencies. The rather lurid "*Dies irae*" is given without any unreasonable overemphasis, but the same cannot be said of the entire "*Tuba mirum*." The soprano, Hanna Seebach-Ziegler, is certainly the best of the soloists; both the tenor and the alto have a tendency to Italianate theatricality, and the bass lacks range and flexibility. The number does not appear to be an entirely successful whole, hovering as it does between dramatic intensity in the middle portions and a more typically Mozartean graceful musical beauty in the last section. The *Mass in B*, K. 275, is a fairly early work written in 1777, but this soprano solo, in the form of a *da capo* aria, has a tender loveliness which makes it very attractive. The first number from the *Coronation Mass* (K. 317) is not from the set made in Salzburg which I mentioned above. This "*Agnus Dei*" is justly celebrated for its beauty, but like the reverse side is more remarkable for the music than for the performance. One longs for Hedwig von Debieka. In the "*Dona nobis pacem*," which is set separately, the orchestra has a tendency to drown out the voices, although in this case the prominent trumpets add a brilliant effect. It is in the *Sonata* for organ and orchestra, in C K. 329, that we get perhaps the best sample of Christschall recording. Written to accompany the entry of the Prince-Bishop, it is a work of exuberant brilliance such as only Mozart could write, and is a pure delight. The organ is given scant prominence and from the registration used is not easily distinguishable without a score, but Messner, whatever his playing, seems to be very good as a Mozart conductor—holding the position of *Domkapellmeister* where he does it is important that he should be.

### Bruckner

BRUCKNER: *Mass No. 2*, in E minor—*Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo* and *Sanctus*. Sung in Latin by the GREGORIUS CHOIR OF THE LIEBFRAUENKIRCHE, ZUERICH, with wind instruments, conducted by HERMANN ODERMATT. CHRISTSCHELL 37-40. (D 12s).

BRUCKNER: *Tota pulchra es, Maria*, sung in Latin by HERMANN GALLOS and the CHOIR OF THE SALZBURG CATHEDRAL, with wind instruments, conducted by JOSEPH MESSNER; and *Lamentation Jeremie*, sung in Latin by the MALE CHOIR. CHRISTSCHELL 90. (D 12).

The choice of a mass by Bruckner for complete recording may seem rather questionable to many of us, although undoubtedly less so in Germany. It would seem as if there might be other nineteenth century settings of the text of more importance. In regard to Bruckner's religious style in general, Grove

says that it "grew out of the baroque concert masses and motets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is religious music, but at the same time free and daring in its individual outlook and modern in its idiom." This second mass was published in 1866 and is written in eight parts with accompaniment for wind instruments. We are assured that of his four, it is the one best adapted for liturgical purposes. One may as well state at the outset that whatever the composer's intentions, they fail to come off on these records at least; a firmer and more adequate interpretation and, more especially, a much clearer recording might possibly alter one's opinion. The style is a combination of an attempt at the pure polyphonic manner, alternating with harmonic and fugal sections. The former attempts especially do not seem to be helped by the addition of instruments which rarely play an important part in the musical structure; contrapuntal lines would have been much less blurred and confused if left to stand alone in the vocal parts, and a greatly increased purity of effect would have been secured. The "Kyrie" and the "Sanctus" are undoubtedly the most successful numbers, and at least one reason for this fact is not far to seek: the texts being short and all in one vein, unity of mood and structure is most easily attained. In these two likewise, the writing is most purely polyphonic. The "Sanctus," in particular, has a freshness and spontaneity and a spirituality, which, although it is much muddled here, make it outstanding. But in the complex "Gloria" and "Credo"—especially in the latter—Bruckner falls into what seems to me a serious pitfall when one is writing a mass of any ordinary liturgical length. If one is creating such a tremendous work as the Bach, or even the Beethoven *Mass*—for in the latter also, the different sections of the "Gloria" or "Credo" are treated at such length as almost to constitute separate movements—it is possible to set the various phrases in an explanatory or contrasting fashion, but in a work of these dimensions one should strive his utmost for a formal and flowing unity, uninterrupted by sharp breaks or changes of *tempo*, such as is achieved by one of the longer movements of a Palestrina mass. Otherwise the movement will become a thing of shreds and patches, some of which are undoubtedly beautiful, such as the music of the "Crucifixus" here, which is treated like a *chorale* and is admirable in its solemnity,—but the effect as a whole will be choppy and lacking in dignity. Such a thing as the sudden pause and hushed minor whispering of the words "mortuos" and "mortuorum" is really inexcusable—abrupt and momentary as it is, it merely interrupts the flow of the structure; only when, as in the "Confiteor" of the *B Minor Mass*, a whole movement is devoted to the contrast between life and death is such a sudden shift not only dramatically effective but artistically completely justifiable. The Antiphon "Tota pulchra es, Maria," for solo tenor, choir and organ was written in the year 1882. It is rather effective in its simplicity, and is well sung by both soloist and chorus. The *Lament of Jeremiah* over Jerusalem, although bearing no composer's name, is also presumably by Bruckner. In any case, quite unadorned and recalling the gregorian in the rise and fall of its line, this is church music of the purest and most appropriate type.

ROBERT H. S. PHILLIPS

### Orchestral

WARLOCK: *Capriol Suite*—*Basse Danse*, *Pavane*, *Tordoin*, *Bransles*, *Pieds-en-l'air*, *Mattachins*, played by the LONDON CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, conducted by ANTHONY BERNARD. DECCA K-576 (D12).

The strange dual personality, Philip Heseltine—Peter Warlock—critic, composer, historian, and rare musical spirit, committed suicide recently, cutting short a vivid and unusual career. Why is it that the arid souls, the Saint-Saens et al, attain monumental ages, while the Schumanns, Wolfs, and Warlocks come to swift and tragic ends. It is good to remember Warlock by more than the scanty couple of recordings we have had previously—the tribute to Delius (N. G. S.) and that magical setting of *Corpus Christi* sung by the English Singers (Roycroft). The *Capriol* suite is a masterpiece that combines the best qualities of a bygone and the present musical age. W. R. Anderson writes about it so informatively and sympathetically in the May *Gramophone* that I cannot do better than to quote his words: "Warlock has orchestrated these dances from the famous book about dancing, called *Orchésographie*, made by the priest Jehan Tabourot, who, always delighting in dancing, set down his expert directions, and the tunes, when he was nearly seventy (the book appeared in the Armada year). He augraphed his name into Thoinot Arbeau (the J standing for I), and as such he is remembered—the more widely because we now have Warlock's lovely harmonizations of some of his examples. . . . *Capriol* was the imaginary lawyer-friend (Tabourot was a lawyer's son) with whom "Arbeau" discussed the mysteries of dancing, in the book. . . . If you can press the exquisite, heart-easing *Pieds en l'air* without playing it at least three times, I shall be disappointed in you. It kept me happy a whole wet morning."

I might add that if you can pass any of the six dances without three-fold and thrice three-fold repetition, your musical sensibilities are dulled indeed. There are no limitations on this music's appeal; recorded and played so competently this disc should be an universal favorite. Why does not some alert American conductor introduce it into this country? Because it would so surely put his contemporary "novelties" so conclusively in the shade. . . . ?

ROGER-DUCASSE: *Petite Suite* and *Le joli jeu du furet*, played by a SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by ROGER-DUCASSE. ARTIPHON 07502 (D12).

The labels here give the composer's name as Roger Ducasse. More strictly it is Jean-Jules-Amable Roger-Ducasse. He is a French composer and pedagogue, born in 1875, and a pupil of Fauré. His most important orchestral work is probably the *Sarabande*, occasionally performed in this country, and recently recorded under the direction of Monteux for French H. M. V. Distinctly a minor composer, his work like that of most minor Frenchmen bears the marks of evident distinction and polish. In addition it is sauced by no little Gallic wit, and while brightly modern in idiom, the contrapuntal structure is firmly knit. On the other hand it strikes me that his melodic invention, while fluent, is not very fertile, and I miss the engaging naïveté of a man like Inghelbrecht.

The Bach concerto below and the present disc mark Roger-Ducasse's recording debut, I believe. To represent his own work he has chosen two of his best known pieces, the *Petite Suite*, written originally for piano four-hands (1897) and orchestrated in 1911; and *Le joli jeu du furet* (1909), written first for children's chorus and orchestra, later revised as a scherzo for orchestra alone. The suite comprises three pieces, "Souvenance," "Berceuse," and "Claironnerie" (without recourse to a score I should say that only the second two were recorded here). Hill praises it a model of captivating directness, deft precision of effect and evident individuality. Of the *Joli jeu* he writes that it is the product of a graceful musical wit somewhat akin to Dukas' *L'Apprenti sorcier* (if on a lesser scale). I like best the glittering "Claironnerie" for its gay rhythmical life and exceedingly brilliant orchestration. The scherzo is scarcely less brilliant, but hardly possesses the same abandon and light-heartedness.

An excellent addition to any representative collection of recorded contemporary French music.

BACH: *Concerto for three pianos and string orchestra*, played by the ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE, conducted by ROGER-DUCASSE. ARTIPHON 07506-9 (2 D12s).

French H. M. V. gave us one of the two Bach concertos for three pianos nearly three years ago. Now the French branch of the Artiphon company issues the other. The soloists are unnamed, but Roger-Ducasse knits their competent playing into the vigorous string orchestral fabric with no small skill. Whereas the earlier release was marred by uneven recording and bad centration, the present discs are done with marked effectiveness. The music is not great Bach, but it is unmistakably Bachian, forthright, vigorous, and lusty. Like every competent Bach recording it can be recommended unreservedly for any record collection. (The labelling seems to be somewhat confusing. Instead of two movements, Adagio and Allegro, each taking two sides, there are obviously three movements, Allegro, Adagio, Allegro.)

### Piano

CHOPIN: *Trois Ecossaises* and *Etude in A flat* (posthumous), played by BORIS GOLSCHMANN. HEBERTOT DW-30,000 (D8½).

SINDING: *Marsch-Groteske* and *Am Spinett*, played by BIRGER HAMMER. ARTIPHON 11342 (D10).

HOLBROOKE: *Rangoon Rice Carriers* and *Dance from "The Enchanter,"* played by JOSEF HOLBROOKE. PICCADILLY 5078 (D10).

The tiny Hébertot disc—the first of its make I have heard—is a distinct contribution to minor Chopiniana, although the Etude has been previously recorded by Moriz Rosenthal for Edison. It is the best known of the three "Nouvelles Etudes," not included in the 24 etudes of Opp. 10 and 25. It is more of a prelude in mood than an etude, for its technical difficulties are skillfully disguised by the atmosphere of "gentle spriteliness and lingering sweetness." It is exceedingly interesting to compare the Golschmann and Rosenthal readings. Rosenthal has the advantage of superior recording, and his

version has more crystalline clarity, assurance, and sharper contrasts,—yet Golschmann's restrained, nostalgic treatment is no less poetic. I am not sure, but I think that Golschmann's is the first recording of the three Ecossaises, Op. 72c. These Schottisch miniature have been badly treated by Chopin commentators: "rhythm and melody without poetry, matter with a minimum of soul" (Niecks); "without any emotional or poetical value . . . neither the simplicity or melody necessary to make up for their deficiency in more serious qualities" (Ashton Jonson). Such remarks must have been made on the basis of "girls' boarding school" performances (in which—according to Huneker—they are highly popular), for in Golschmann's vivacious, graceful versions no "serious qualities" are needed to augment the pleasure one derives from their gay sportiveness.

Anything of Sinding would be a relief from the eternal *Rustle of Spring*. *Am Spinett* is pretty thin stuff on the tinkling music box imitation order, but the *Marsch-Groteske* is a lusty piece on the country dance order, dashed off with hearty vigor by a Scandinavian pianist. The Holbrooke pieces are equally inconsequential, but rather more pretentious. *Rangoon Rice Carriers* is from the lengthy collection, *The Orient*; its exoticism is highly synthetic and there is nothing in its content to atone for the noisy, ugly treatment. The *Dance* is also pretty forced, but possesses much more character and well marked form. The composer plays them energetically enough, but hardly succeeds in giving them much conviction. It is a pity to know the bad boy of British composers only by these trifles. There are British records of excerpts from his most important opera, *Bronwen*, but I should like to hear some major orchestral works. Surely there must be some genuine musical qualities in Holbrooke's writing.

### Songs

NEGRO SPIRITUALS: *Heaven, Heaven* (arr. BURLEIGH), and *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child* (arr. BROWN), sung in English by MARIAN ANDERSON, with piano accompaniments by WILLIAM KING. ARTIPHON 11749 (D10).

DEBUSSY: *L'Enfant Prodigue—Air de Lia*, and TCHAIKOWSKY: *Jeanne d'Arc—Air des Adieux*, sung in French by MARIAN ANDERSON, with orchestral accompaniments. ARTIPHON 11767 (D10).

A Marian Anderson record appeared in the British H. M. V. lists last month, but several Artiphon releases anticipated this welcome return of the highly gifted contralto. Spirituals are her particular métier and the two favorites sung here show her dusky voice to excellent advantage. Her style is likewise good, except for the choice of an overly slow pace for *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*. The two arias are sung with considerable poignance, but here the exceedingly veiled quality of the voice itself and the not too clean cut enunciation give the performance less distinction.

RESPIGHI: *Nebbie, and Tosti: Serenata*, sung in Italian by FELIPE ROMITO, with orchestral accompaniments. ARTIPHON 11586 (D10).

*Nebbie* is Respighi's best-known song and Romito's dramatic performance could hardly be bettered. The eternal *Serenata* is done more heavily and marred by a pitch variation in the recording. R. D. D.

## The PHONOPHILE'S BOOKSHELF

THE GRAMOPHONE. Edited by Compton MacKenzie. INDEX TO VOLUME VIII (June 1930 to May 1931). London: The Gramophone (Publications) Ltd. Price, 2s. 6d., post free.

On the completion of its eighth year *The Gramophone* issues a typical example of its detailed indices. This one is compiled by R. W. Brayne and Alex. McLachlan, and in arrangement, typography, and accuracy it represents an advancement even on the excellence of previous indices. The system of indexing is quite elaborate, but it permits an exceedingly complete reference to records—not only those issued and reviewed in the course of a year, but also the exceedingly important foreign, antique, etc., discs mentioned in the course of articles, columns, or correspondence.

### The Bruckner Gospel

THE LIFE OF ANTON BRUCKNER. By Gabriel Engel. New York, Roerich Museum Press. 57 pages, 50 cents.

This biography of Bruckner, the first to be done in English, is published in collaboration with the Bruckner Society of America. Mr. Engel, who lives in Vienna, is a musician and obviously a staunch Brucknerite. He sketches briefly the career of the Austrian village schoolmaster who wrote his first symphony when he was forty years old. But Mr. Engel does more than to chronicle bare facts, he gives a sympathetic study of an original and great musical personality without penetrating too deeply into his music or attempting an analysis of it.

Fate was cruel to Bruckner. His friendship with Wagner sufficed to ruin his chances of having his works performed in Vienna while the Hanslick coterie was in control. Unlike the protagonist Wagner, who was a glutton for punishment, the simple, retiring organist of Linz could not withstand the assault and there is something both pathetic and sublime, as Hull says, "in the spectacle of this man going

forward turning out the huge score of one great symphony after another, nine in all, without troubling at all about their performance." He was an old man when recognition finally came through the efforts of the Wagnerian conductors, Richter, Levi, Seidl and later Muck and Nikisch. Mr. Engel relates an incident about Bruckner which is characteristic. Richter had accepted the "Romantic" Symphony and invited Bruckner to a rehearsal. When the symphony was over, Bruckner, his face beaming with enthusiasm and joy, went to Richter and pressed a coin into his hand. "Take this," he said, "and drink a glass of beer to my health."

Mr. Engel develops the idea of a spiritual affinity between Bruckner and Wagner and concludes that the future will simply have to regard the two composers as one in spirit, but supplementary in achievement. It is difficult to appraise Bruckner because one has had so little opportunity to examine his music. Incidentally the Bruckner cult has an unparalleled opportunity to spread the gospel by means of the phonograph as very little of Bruckner has as yet been recorded. There is no question that Bruckner was influenced by Wagner's work, but it is a little difficult to trace a true spiritual affinity. Is it not possible that Bruckner in his humility and genuine religious fervour mistook Wagner's theatrical pathos for his own emotions? His monumental symphonies sprang from a crystal clear and an essentially naive soul and a mind not given to doubts, while the chromaticism of Wagner, on the other hand, was symbolic of a doubting mind. One can also understand how profound an effect *Parsifal* must have had on the devout Catholic Bruckner, but his mysticism is of a different kind.

For all the beauty in Bruckner's music, it is doubtful whether it will ever have universal appeal. Mr. Engel is not too optimistic. There is too great a gulf between it and modern music. The same is also true of Mahler's work in spite of his futurism. There are indications however of a partial return to it—perhaps as an antidote.

A. A. B.

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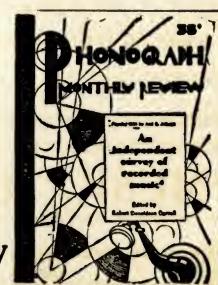
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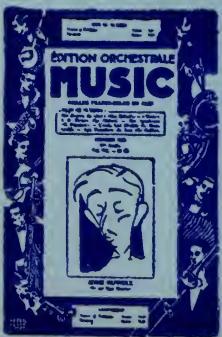
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